

When to Seek Medical Care in Child Care

There are medical emergencies or urgent situations which require immediate medical attention by Emergency Medical Services. Some children may have urgent situations that do not necessarily require ambulance transport but still need medical attention. Childcare Providers should have a written policy regarding Emergency Procedures. After calling EMS, remember to call the parent or guardian.



Prepare Before Emergencies Occur

- Know how to access Emergency Medical Services (EMS) in your area.
- Train staff to recognize an emergency.
- Document the phone number for each child's guardian and primary health care provider.
- Develop plans for children with special medical needs with their family and physician.
- Do a daily health check on each child.

When to Call Emergency Medical Services Immediately

- You believe the child's life is at risk or there is a risk of permanent injury.
- The child is acting strangely, much less alert, or much more withdrawn than usual.
- The child has difficulty breathing or is unable to speak.
- The child's skin or lips look blue, purple or gray.
- The child has rhythmic jerking of arms and legs and a loss of consciousness (seizure)
- The child is unconscious.
- The child is less and less responsive.
- The child has any of the following after a head injury: decrease in level of alertness, confusion, headache, vomiting, irritability, or difficulty walking.
- The child has increasing or severe pain anywhere.
- The child has a cut or burn that is large, deep, and/or won't stop bleeding.
- The child is vomiting blood.

- The child has a severe stiff neck, headache, and fever,
- The child is significantly dehydrated: sunken eyes, lethargic, not making tears, not urinating.

When to Seek Medical Attention Within One Hour

- Fever in any age child who looks more than mildly ill.
- Fever in a child less than 2 months (8 weeks) of age.
- A quickly spreading purple or red rash.
- A large volume of blood in the stools
- A cut that may require stitches.
- Any medical condition specifically outlined in a child's care plan requiring parental notification.

Talking Points for Parents

- Parents should be involved in developing Emergency Policies and Procedures.
- Parents should sign a consent authorizing the child to be treated by Emergency Medical Personnel.
- Encourage parents to share information about their child's health issues with the provider each day.

Resources:

Managing Infectious Diseases in Child Care and Schools, AAP, 2005

American Academy of Pediatrics: www.aap.org or 888-227-5409.

*Information consistent with Caring for Our Children, 2002: <http://nrc.uchsc.edu>